

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides methods for detecting the presence or absence of a difference between two related nucleic acid sequences. The methods achieve sensitivities great enough to detect the presence of any difference between the nucleic acids, even single nucleotide polymorphisms. In the methods, the nucleic acids are contacted under conditions in which they are capable of forming a stable four-way complex if the nucleic acids differ in sequence. The presence of the four way complex is determined with a detection molecule and a labeled four-stranded tracer molecule.

10

15

20

25

30

35